

The Armenian people have a long and proud history. In the fourth century, they became the first nation to embrace Christianity. During World War I, the Ottoman Empire was ruled by an organization known as the Young Turk Committee, which allied with Germany. Amid fighting in the Ottoman Empire's eastern Anatolian provinces, the historic heartland of the Christian Armenians, Ottoman authorities ordered the deportation and execution of all Armenians in the region. By the end of 1923, virtually the entire Armenian population of Anatolia and western Armenia had either been killed or deported.

While it is important to keep the lessons of history in mind, we must also remain committed to protecting Armenia from new and more hostile aggressors. In the last decade, thousands of lives have been lost and more than a million people displaced in the struggle between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabagh. Even now, as we rise to commemorate the accomplishments of the Armenian people and mourn the tragedies they have suffered, Azerbaijan, Turkey, and other countries continue to engage in a debilitating blockade of this free nation.

Consistently, I have testified before the Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee on the important issue of bringing peace to a troubled area of the world. I continued my support for maintaining the level of funding for the Southern Caucasus region of the Independent States (IS), and of Armenia in particular. In addition, on February 26, 2004, I joined several of my colleagues in sending a letter to President Bush urging him to ensure parity in military assistance between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues, Representatives JOE KNOLLENBERG and FRANK PALLONE, for organizing this special order to commemorate the 89th Anniversary of the Armenian genocide. Their efforts will not only help bring needed attention to this tragic period in world history, but also serve to remind us of our duty to protect basic human rights and freedoms around the world.

INTRODUCTION OF THE VIRGINIA RIDGE AND VALLEY ACT OF 2005

HON. RICK BOUCHER

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 4, 2005

Mr. BOUCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Virginia Ridge and Valley Act of 2005. Southwest Virginia possesses the State's best outdoor experience, with the highest mountains, most interesting rivers and superb hunting, camping, fishing, hiking and backpacking opportunities. With the preservation of our region's natural assets in mind, I have joined with U.S. Senator JOHN WARNER in introducing the Virginia Ridge and Valley Act of 2005. If enacted, the legislation would create 7 new Wilderness Areas, 2 new National Scenic Areas and would expand 6 existing Wilderness Areas. The new or expanded areas would be designated in portions of Bland, Craig, Grayson, Giles, Lee, Montgomery and Smyth Counties within the Jefferson National Forest.

Designating a tract of land as wilderness enables the U.S. Forest Service to preserve

the scenic and undisturbed character of the landscape. Recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, camping, canoeing, kayaking, swimming, picnicking, backpacking, bird watching, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, spelunking, rock-climbing and many other outdoor activities would be continued and encouraged in the new Wilderness Areas. At the same time, motorized traffic and mechanized equipment would be banned to prevent any disruption to the ecosystems and diverse wildlife in the areas.

The seven proposed Wilderness Areas are:

Stone Mountain (Cave Springs)—The Stone Mountain proposed Wilderness Area is a 3,270-acre tract of land adjacent to the North Fork of the Powell River in Lee County. The property is considered to be the least disturbed forest in all of Southwest Virginia and is home to populations of two rare salamanders. The Stone Mountain and Payne Branch trails are included as part of the proposed Wilderness Area and provide convenient access for hikers and hunters wishing to visit the Wilderness Area. The trails are also connected to an adjacent campground at Cave Springs.

Raccoon Branch—The Raccoon Branch proposed Wilderness Area is located in Smyth County in the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area. The property contains 4,223 acres of extremely rugged country characterized by high ridges and low streams. Eight major trails provide excellent access for hunters, fishermen, hikers and horseback riders and two nearby campgrounds serve as convenient trailheads. In addition, 4.5 miles of the Appalachian Trail also traverses the proposed Wilderness Area.

Garden Mountain—The Garden Mountain proposed Wilderness Area contains 3,291 acres of land which lies on the southern flank of Garden Mountain in Bland County. The area borders the unique geological structure of Burkes Garden and possesses two developed trails, totaling 8 miles when combined. Along the northern boundary, the Appalachian Trail leads across the summit of Garden Mountain, while the Lick Creek Trail provides access to the area along the valley bottom.

Hunting Camp Creek—The Hunting Camp Creek proposed Wilderness Area encompasses the headwaters of both Hunting Camp Creek and Little Wolf Creek in Bland County and is characterized by its exceptionally pristine nature. The area consists of 8,470 acres that stretch from ridge top to ridge top. The Appalachian Trail traverses the area in addition to two informal trails along an old logging railroad grade next to Hunting Camp Creek and along the crest of Brushy Mountain. Brushy Mountain forms the Southeast boundary of the proposed wilderness, and Garden Mountain forms the northwestern edge. Virginia Routes 623, 615 and 610 complete the area's boundary.

Lynn Camp Creek—The Lynn Camp Creek proposed Wilderness Area is also located in Bland County and is 3,226 acres in size. The area is characterized by three parallel ridges which enclose the major stream valleys of Lick Creek and Lynn Camp Creek and provide the opportunity for good views. From the top of Lynn Camp Mountain, hikers can view Chestnut Ridge and the Beartown Wilderness. From Brushy Mountain, hikers overlook the valley of Lynn Camp Creek on one side and Big Walker Mountain on the other side. In addition, both Lick Creek and Lynn Camp Creek are excellent brook trout waters.

Brush Mountain—The Brush Mountain proposed Wilderness Area is located in Montgomery County, adjacent to the Town of Blacksburg and Virginia Tech. The area is 4,794 acres in size and extends approximately 8 miles along the northwest slope of Brush Mountain. The property is characterized largely by its remoteness, despite its proximity to the suburbs of Blacksburg, providing hunters and hikers with a feeling of true wilderness solitude.

Brush Mountain East—The Brush Mountain East proposed Wilderness Area is adjacent to the Brush Mountain proposed Wilderness Area and is located in Craig County. This tract is 3,769 acres in size and shares many of the characteristics of its neighboring proposed Wilderness Area. Brush Mountain East also possesses excellent views along Craig Creek and Brush Mountain's steep mountain face.

The Virginia Ridge and Valley Act also includes the designations for two new National Scenic Areas. Differing from Wilderness Areas, the guidelines protecting National Scenic Areas allow mountain biking and limited motorized access in certain portions of the Scenic Areas. At the same time, the natural and historic resources within the proposed National Scenic Areas would be protected to preserve the landscape.

The proposed National Scenic Areas designated in the legislation are:

Bear Creek—The Bear Creek proposed National Scenic Area is located in Smyth County and includes 5,503 acres. The area extends from the crest of Walker Mountain southward to the crest of Brushy Mountain and includes the enclosed valley of Bear Creek between the two mountains. An extensive network of trails is included in the proposed area, including more than four miles of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

Seng Mountain—The Seng Mountain proposed National Scenic Area is 6,455 acres in size and is located in the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area in Smyth County. Rowland Creek Falls, a 45-foot cascading waterfall is a major scenic attraction in the area. The area also includes a network of recreational trails and convenient access is provided to visitors via the Hurricane Campground and Skulls Gap Picnic Area.

Finally, the Virginia Ridge and Valley Act would expand six existing Wilderness Areas to further protect the unique and undisturbed landscape of the region.

Lewis Fork Wilderness Area in Smyth and Grayson Counties will be expanded to include an additional 308 acres.

Little Wilson Creek Wilderness Area in Grayson County will be expanded by 1,845 acres.

Kimberling Creek Wilderness Area in Bland County will be expanded to include 612 additional acres of wilderness.

Peters Mountain Wilderness Area, which is located in Giles County, will be expanded to include an additional 1,203 acres.

Mountain Lake Wilderness Area in Giles and Craig Counties will be expanded by 5,476 acres.

Shawvers Run Wilderness Area in Craig County will be expanded to include an additional 2,456 acres.

I am pleased to report that the new proposed designations which are included in the legislation which Senator Warner and I have introduced have received local support. Each

of the proposed Wilderness and National Scenic Area designations has been endorsed by either the U.S. Forest Service or the Board of Supervisors of the County in which the area would be located.

The legislation has also garnered significant support in the U.S. House of Representatives by several other Virginia Congressmen. U.S. Representatives BOBBY SCOTT (VA-03), JIM MORAN (VA-08), FRANK WOLF (VA-10) and TOM DAVIS (VA-11) are original co-sponsors of the Virginia Ridge and Valley Act. I look forward to working closely with my Virginia colleagues in both the House and the Senate to obtain approval for this worthy legislation.

IN HONOR OF THE UJA
FEDERATION OF BAYONNE

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 4, 2005

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the UJA Federation of Bayonne for its outstanding service to the Jewish community. The UJA Federation hosted its Holocaust memorial program on May 3, 2005, in New Jersey.

As an umbrella organization for Jewish residents, the UJA Federation strives to support and sustain the local Jewish community. Apart from development, it focuses on issues related to the Holocaust and the remembrance of that tragic event.

The UJA Federation of Bayonne will soon be hosting its Holocaust Remembrance Day Observance. The keynote speaker will be Edward Mosberg, a survivor of the Krakow Ghetto and the Plaszow and Mauthausen concentration camps, who will share his experience of living in Poland during World War II. The observance will also include readings by children from local Jewish schools and a candle lighting ceremony by local Holocaust survivors. The day will serve as an opportunity to reflect on this dark hour of world history, in the hope that we may gain wisdom for the future by remembering the past.

Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the UJA Federation of Bayonne for its support and outreach to the residents of New Jersey and its worthwhile efforts to honor the memory of those who perished in the Holocaust.

FLORIDA'S TENNIS SEC
TOURNAMENT TITLES

HON. CLIFF STEARNS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 4, 2005

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate both the University of Florida's Men's and Women's Tennis teams on claiming the South Eastern Conference's Tournament Titles. The second-seeded and fifth-ranked University of Florida men's tennis team won the SEC tournament for the third time in school history, as the Gators defeated fifth-seeded and 26th ranked Tennessee on Sunday, April 24, 2005 at the Dan Magill Tennis Complex in Athens, GA. With the victory, the

Men's team moved to 20-5 on the year and earned the SEC's automatic invitation to the NCAA Championships marking their 15th consecutive trip. Likewise, the University of Florida women's tennis team staged an unbelievable comeback rallying to win its 4th consecutive and 14th overall SEC Tournament title with a 4-2 victory over third-ranked Kentucky, Sunday afternoon at the Alabama Tennis Stadium. I congratulate both of Florida's Men's and Women's tennis teams on their SEC tournament title and wish them much luck as they head into the NCAA Tournament!

HONORING MR. JOHN PACO

HON. CHARLES A. GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 4, 2005

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a young American, Mr. John Paco, of San Antonio who has dedicated his life to helping others. Nor would this be the only body to recognize the work of John Paco. The American Ambulance Association has chosen to honor John as a 2005 Star of Life for over 10 years of service in emergency medicine. As lead supervisor for American Medical Response at Randolph Air Force Base, John has been at the forefront of improving the care and streamlining the operations in his unit. John's peers nominated him for this award because they know in a crisis of any sort, John can be counted on. Moreover, John's attitude conveys to his coworkers and patients good will and competence.

In situations where one's health and livelihood hang in the balance, a steady hand, a smile, and cool, quick efficiency can make the difference between surviving and serious, even permanent disability. The same way you and I go to our office and make decisions that may affect the lives of many Americans, John goes to his workplace, but the stakes are much higher. A fraction of a second lost or misused or a thousand other x-factors can mean immediate and irreversible change for a person unable to fight for his or her life.

John's demeanor enables him to quickly connect with others, a skill vital in working with others when the consequences can be so dire. One of John's coworkers has said he will make the best of a bad situation which strikes me as a fitting description for what he does every time he dons his uniform. When someone dials 911, the situation is grave, so having someone as able and devoted as John on the scene ensures both a high level of competence and care. His can-do attitude and efficacy are crucial in a profession like John's and his leadership inspires those who serve under him.

San Antonio is proud to have one of its own commended, especially a person who has given so selflessly of himself and has touched the lives of so many in our community. By giving so much of himself, John his efforts in helping to streamline and improve a number of procedures vital to the timely care of the injured. The PowerPoint presentation he helped develop demonstrated the costs financial and otherwise of ambulance collisions to all involved.

TRIBUTE TO BISHOP WALTER H.
RICHARDSON

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 4, 2005

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise to pay tribute to Bishop Walter H. Richardson, one of Miami-Dade County's quintessential religious leaders. During the Annual Unity Day Celebration held at the Allen Chapel AME Church in Miami last April 24, 2005, Bishop Richardson was honored, along with other distinguished members of our church community. The theme: "United in Christ, Reaching out to Touch Others with God's Love," saliently symbolizes the ministry of this humble Man of God.

It was in the mid 1940s when he came down to Miami from his native Ansonville, North Carolina after accepting the Lord as his personal Savior. Indeed, it was a unique calling that evoked God's choice: "... for many are called, but few are chosen." As a young man, he supported himself by getting a job at the old Miami Sears & Roebuck Store. He got engaged to his sweetheart, Poseline McLaughlin, whom he left behind in North Carolina, and she later joined him in Miami after she also accepted the Lord. They got married and were soon blessed with two sons. Their marriage lasted for 49 years until her untimely demise in 1996.

This tribute to Bishop Richardson comes at a time when his ministry is defined by the primacy of his consecration to God's covenant of love and compassion to all those hungering for the good news emanating from the Lord's Gospel. His calling is symbolic of his readiness to reach out to those who seek refuge and solace in the sanctuary of his Church, and bespeaks of God's preeminence in the conduct of their lives.

The longevity of his commitment to the less fortunate has become legendary. When I think of his early work with the civil rights movement, his untiring efforts paralleled much of our nation's history as we struggled through the harrowing challenges of racial equality and simple justice for all. I came to admire him for his understanding and empathy for the "little people and poor folks" of our community. Blessed with a lucid common sense and a quick grasp of the issues at hand, Bishop Richardson's influence continues to be felt at a time when our community needs to put in perspective the agony and dissatisfaction of marginalized blacks and other minorities yearning to belong and pursue the American spirit of optimism.

This is the magnificent legacy of Bishop Walter H. Richardson. My pride in honoring him today and my privilege in sharing his friendship are only exceeded by my gratitude for everything he has sacrificed on our behalf.

TRIBUTE TO MR. ALLIE E.
BROOKS, JR.

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 4, 2005

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Professor Allie. E. Brooks, Jr.,